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SUBJECT: MONUC CONSULTATIONS, APRIL 15, 2008

¶1. USUN is instructed to draw upon the following elements during MONUC consultations scheduled for April 15, 2008.

Begin Elements.

-We welcome the Twenty-Fifth report of the Secretary General on MONUC, and commend the Secretary General, his Special Representative, and all MONUC personnel's dedicated service to the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). We would also like to thank all troop contributing countries, and applaud the outstanding service of former Special Representative Bill Swing.

-We condemn the ongoing violence in the Kivus, and the deterioration of the situation in the provinces over the past months. We welcome MONUC's increased presence in the area to address the situation, but we regret the circumstances that required MONUC's redeployment. The U.S. is hopeful, however, that the two statements of commitment for North and South Kivu will facilitate a ceasefire, the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process, as well as the return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

-The U.S. supports the relocation of MONUC's disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement or reintegration section to Goma, but we are concerned with the overall slow progress of implementation of these programs, and emphasize that armed groups must turn themselves in to Congolese and MONUC authorities. The U.S. recognizes, however, that there have been positive steps forward. The signing of the Nairobi Communiqué, and the passage of Resolution 1804 address the situation of foreign armed groups in eastern DRC, and have led to a renewed focus on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and resettlement or repatriation, which is an important factor for achieving benchmarks. In this regard, we commend the efforts of the Government of the DRC, Rwanda, international partners, and MONUC for their involvement in these historic processes.

- We congratulate the Government of the DRC and all parties to the Goma Agreement on the official start of its implementation phase. We welcome the launch of the joint technical commission on peace and security, and view it as a significant step towards the consolidation of peace, extension of State authority, termination of the involuntary displacement of civilians, and a reduction in human rights abuses.

- The U.S. agrees that the full extension of State authority throughout the DRC is an essential step towards stability, and we note that a substantially strengthened Congolese Army (FARDC) is critical to achieving this goal. We congratulate MONUC for the conclusion of basic training programs for FARDC integrated battalions, and welcome the addition of more and enhanced classes.

- We thank MONUC for its efforts in monitoring ceasefires, and for its work in providing security for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and for the return and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons.

-The U.S. acknowledges that the Secretary General has seen little progress in security sector reform, and emphasizes that it is a key benchmark. The convening of a roundtable in February by the Government was a positive development, but as was stated in the Secretary General's report, the Congolese government must do more to address management of the defense sector. We do, however, commend the progress that has been made on police sector reform, and thank MONUC for its efforts here.

-We express our ongoing support for MONUC's assistance with the conduct of orderly and credible local elections, and hope that we do not continue to see a delay in the electoral process.

-The U.S. deplores the violence taking place in Bas-Congo. We urge restraint and reconciliation, and recognize the increased role MONUC has been playing in the province. We are also greatly alarmed by the surge in violent crime in Kinshasa and other provinces.

-The U.S. abhors the sexual and gender violence, the arbitrary executions, acts of rape, torture, and other degrading treatment that elements of armed groups, including FARDC, are inflicting upon Congolese society. We condemn the state of virtual impunity for these serious offenses, and stand ready to welcome the United Nations accelerated common action plan to combat sexual and gender-based violence.

-We are troubled that the Secretary General notes in his report that the humanitarian situation in the DRC &remains bleak.<sup>8</sup> The U.S. emphasizes that forced recruitment and re-recruitment by armed groups, and harassment of humanitarian workers and human rights advocates is unacceptable.

End Elements.  
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